

# ACHiEVER





## Dear Friend:

In this issue of *Achiever*, we broaden our focus, looking to the very definition of higher education and to the role that UMUC plays in the world.

The issue opens with a feature on Dori Samadzai-Bonner, a refugee from Afghanistan whose unforgettable story brought her all the way to center court for the opening

ceremonies of the U.S. Open tennis championship. For her, tennis—and education—have come to embody the cherished freedoms offered by her adopted country.

Our second feature focuses on Sabrina S. Fu, winner of a 2010 Stanley J. Drazek Teaching Excellence Award from UMUC. Fu holds a PhD from one of America's elite graduate schools and worked for years as an expert in nuclear waste remediation, but it is her practical tips for living a sustainable, healthy, responsible life that many of her students remember most.

A third feature focuses on Eric Key, director of the UMUC Arts Program. With more than 20 years of experience in art administration and a passion for the world of art and its power to educate and illuminate, Key has enthusiastically tackled the full-time job of managing and growing UMUC's huge collection of Maryland and international art.

Finally, you'll read a thought-provoking piece by Jay Liebowitz, Orkand Endowed Chair in Management and Technology in UMUC's Graduate School. In a piece entitled, "Knowledge Seekers and Knowledge Providers," Liebowitz explores the ever-evolving role of the university in creating and sharing knowledge.

That's in addition to the usual news updates and Class Notes that are part of every issue. I hope you find them as interesting and inspiring as I do, and—as always—I hope you'll continue to share your own news and perspectives with us.

Sincerely,

SUSAN C. ALDRIDGE, PHD  
PRESIDENT  
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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## COVER STORY

### 6 More Than a Game

BY ALLAN ZACKOWITZ

For Dori Samadzai-Bonner, a young refugee from Afghanistan, tennis came to represent the freedom of her adopted homeland.

## NEWS AND UPDATES

- 2 UMUC Receives \$1.2 Million Grant from The Kresge Foundation
- 2 Booz Allen Hamilton Looks to UMUC for Cybersecurity Training
- 3 Textbook Selection Program Saves Students Money
- 3 AUSA Chooses UMUC as Sole Education Provider
- 4 UMUC Hosts Historic Debate on U.S.–Iran Policy
- 4 Melissa Hathaway, Cybersecurity Expert, Visits UMUC
- 4 UMUC Signs MOU with UNISA
- 20 Knowledge Seekers and Knowledge Providers
- 21 Class Notes

## FEATURES

### 12 BRINGING SCIENCE TO LIFE

BY CHIP CASSANO

Dr. Sabrina S. Fu—winner of the 2010 Stanley J. Drazek Teaching Excellence Award—lives a life guided by the same scientific principles she teaches her students every day.

### 17 ART. ACCESS. INSPIRATION.

BY CHIP CASSANO

For Eric Key, director of UMUC’s Arts Program, the university’s vast and growing collection represents both a passion and a pastime.





## UMUC Receives \$1.2 Million Grant from The Kresge Foundation

### BY UMUC PUBLIC RELATIONS

University of Maryland University College (UMUC) received a \$1.2 million grant from The Kresge Foundation to develop predictive models and success interventions designed to help close the achievement gap for underserved adult students in Maryland. The project—which will be conducted in partnership with two other Maryland schools, Prince George’s Community College and Montgomery College—aims to improve student retention and completion rates through data mining techniques, and will be conducted over a three-year period.

“UMUC is committed to providing flexible, affordable, high-quality programs for our students, most of whom work full-time or serve in the military while juggling family responsibilities,” said UMUC

President Susan C. Aldridge. “This generous grant from The Kresge Foundation will allow us to explore the gap in student success, retention, and graduation rates. It will help us and our community college partners to identify the factors that hinder some students from reaching their education goals and allow us to develop better strategies for intervening proactively on their behalf.”

Current research indicates that by 2018, more than 68 percent of all jobs will require some postsecondary education—an increase of 40 percent from current needs. This grant project will help meet this increased need by focusing on working adults who graduate from a community college and then pursue a bachelor’s degree. Through this project, UMUC and its community college partners will implement a three-stage process that includes extracting and analyzing student data from each school, identifying strategies of successful and unsuccessful students to create evidence-

based strategies and advising approaches to maximize student success, and developing and disseminating the results.

The grant will also enable UMUC and its partners to develop an integrated database system to build predictive models designed to increase rates of continuous enrollment and eventual graduation. Ultimately, the project is designed to yield a replicable process based on data-driven practices that will lead to increases in student persistence and graduation rates.

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.1 billion private, national foundation, headquartered in metropolitan Detroit, Michigan, that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations.

## Booz Allen Hamilton Looks to UMUC for Cybersecurity Training

### BY UMUC PUBLIC RELATIONS

UMUC has formed a partnership with consulting giant Booz Allen Hamilton to provide graduate-level cybersecurity training to its workforce. This partnership allows Booz Allen employees to complete courses and earn a graduate certificate in one of three tracks: Foundations of Cybersecurity, Cybersecurity Policy, or Cybersecurity Technology. All course credits earned can be applied to UMUC’s master’s degree programs in cybersecurity or cybersecurity policy if employees wish to continue their education. All three graduate certificate programs are also available to the general public starting with the spring 2011 semester.

“Our nation’s ability to successfully protect our critical infrastructure and information

systems from attacks hinges on a trained, ready cyber workforce,” said Mike McConnell, executive vice president at Booz Allen. “At a time when the public and private sector gaps in cyber professionals are cavernous, we are pleased to partner with UMUC to deliver a program aimed at fortifying this workforce.”

Booz Allen’s partnership with UMUC will provide employees with an efficient and cost-effective opportunity to earn a certificate in an online environment. The program will be cohort-based, with up to 25 Booz Allen employees working together to complete a certificate over two or three semesters. Employees can use Booz Allen’s tuition reimbursement program to fund their enrollment in any of the three graduate certificate programs.

“UMUC’s mission is to offer top-quality educational programs that serve working adults while responding to the workforce needs of our state, nation, and world,” said UMUC President Susan C. Aldridge.





“Booz Allen Hamilton has been a leader in cyber consulting for over a decade, and UMUC looks forward to providing their employees with cutting-edge training that addresses the evolving needs of their clients in the technology market.”

The certificates are designed for those already in the workforce in a managerial or leadership position who need to understand cybersecurity issues that may impact their organizations. Each certificate takes a unique approach to the demands and challenges of cybersecurity.

Foundations of Cybersecurity will allow students to assess measures to prevent anticipated cyber intrusions, employ the experiences from past cyber intrusions to mitigate future cyber threats, and formulate and implement enterprise-level policies to successfully prevent and detect cyber intrusions.

The Cybersecurity Policy track will assess the scale and scope of the risk of potential cyber threats at the enter-

prise, national, and global level; assess organizational controls that can detect cyber intrusions as quickly as possible; and assess responses to unanticipated and anticipated cyber intrusions to restore the operations of an organization.

In Cybersecurity Technology, students will learn to analyze cybersecurity issues from different perspectives, lead teams of cybersecurity professionals, and make strategic decisions to prevent and protect entities from cyber threats.

Over 2,000 applications have been received for UMUC’s first online cybersecurity degree programs, which launched in the fall of 2010. The degree programs included a bachelor’s degree in cybersecurity and two master’s degree programs, one in cybersecurity and one in cybersecurity policy.

### Textbook Selection Program Saves Students Money

BY UMUC PUBLIC RELATIONS

UMUC announced in August 2010 that, after reviewing the results of its Competitive Textbook Selection Program, it had saved students a collective \$274,942 in the first of three phases, which included 52 courses, 28,174 purchases, and an average savings of \$9.76 per textbook. Based on the entire commitment periods with publishers, projected savings are expected to total more than \$800,000 in Phase

1, with cumulative savings climbing into the millions as the program continues with Phase 2 and 3.

UMUC’s Competitive Textbook Selection Program is a three-step formal process administered by the UMUC Provost’s Office that requires publishers seeking to sell course materials—and the program or academic directors responsible for choosing those materials—to adhere to a structured annual competitive process for requesting, offering, reviewing, and selecting UMUC course materials. Program or academic directors identify the course material requirements, which are then sent out to publishers for competitive bids. The directors then select the most competitive bid based on academic quality and price. Terms of the agreements with publishers vary depending on the course.

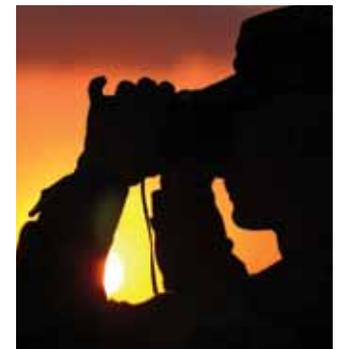
“UMUC’s mission is to provide accessible and affordable higher education, which includes all costs associated with courses,” said UMUC Provost Greg von Lehmen. “By fall 2008, the accelerating costs of course materials for our students had reached a level where we knew we had to take action to stay true to our mission.

The Competitive Textbook Selection Program is unique among Maryland institutions and represents a carefully constructed, three-phase program designed to select the highest quality of academic course materials at the lowest possible price for our students. We are very pleased with

the results of Phase 1, and look forward to continuing to help our students save money on course materials through the next two phases of the program.”

### AUSA Chooses UMUC as Sole Education Provider

BY UMUC PUBLIC RELATIONS



The Association of the United States Army (AUSA) chose UMUC to be the sole education provider to its members. The new agreement provides AUSA’s more than 100,000 members access to all of UMUC’s degree and certificate programs. The agreement runs through June 30, 2012.

“While our troops support us in our endeavors abroad, UMUC is committed to supporting our troops in the classroom, and it is an honor to partner with the AUSA to provide higher education to its members and their families,” said UMUC President Susan C. Aldridge. “UMUC has played a role in providing higher education to our nation’s military for more than 60 years, and we are pleased and proud to expand our commitment to the military under this new agreement.”

AUSA members can choose any one of UMUC’s more than 100 undergraduate or



graduate degree or certificate programs, many of which are available online, on-site, or in a hybrid format that combines online and on-site instruction.

Under the new agreement, out-of-state members are eligible for a tuition reduction of up to 25 percent, depending on the program. AUSA members, spouses, and dependents will also have access to UMUC's programs and services. AUSA is a private, nonprofit educational organization that advances the interests of the U.S. Army by providing recreational and professional development opportunities to soldiers and their families. AUSA members include members of the active-duty Army, National Guard, Army Reserve, wounded warriors, civilians, retirees, government civilians, family members, and veterans.

## UMUC Hosts Historic Debate on U.S.–Iran Policy

BY UMUC PUBLIC RELATIONS

On October 26, 2010, UMUC hosted a historic debate on U.S.–Iran policy, pitting Ambassador Bruce Laingen—the ranking U.S. diplomat held hostage for 444 days during the Iran hostage crisis in the



Ambassador Bruce Laingen (left) debates author and analyst Ken Timmerman (center) as UMUC adjunct professor and moderator Judith Vandegriff looks on.

late 1970s and early 1980s—against best-selling author and analyst Ken Timmerman, president of the Foundation for Democracy in Iran.

The debate was held at UMUC's Shady Grove location as part of a 3-credit course on counterterrorism—a component of UMUC's undergraduate political science curriculum—and moderated by UMUC adjunct professor Judith Vandegriff, a nationally recognized cybersecurity policy specialist. Students listened spellbound for more than two hours as Laingen and Timmerman sparred. Laingen voiced stinging criticisms of the current theocratic regime, but argued for traditional diplomacy as a means of resolving the growing instability in the region and the threat it poses to world peace; Timmerman, in turn, questioned the very legitimacy of the current regime and argued in favor of forceful intervention aimed at isolating and destroying it, while at the same time maintaining cordial relations with the Iranian people.

The debate offered students a remarkable opportunity to interact face-to-face with two thought leaders with unique and competing perspectives on one of today's most pressing issues of national security, diplomacy, and international relations. Following the initial debate, Laingen and Timmerman continued the conversation, offering competing viewpoints and answers to questions posed by students and visiting guests. For more on Laingen's and

Timmerman's views on U.S.–Iran policy, visit [www.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00685.xml](http://www.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00685.xml) and [www.iran.org](http://www.iran.org).

## Melissa E. Hathaway, Cybersecurity Policy Expert, Delivers Orkand Lecture

BY UMUC PUBLIC RELATIONS

Melissa E. Hathaway, president of Hathaway Global Strategies, LLC, was the featured speaker December 15, 2010, at UMUC's Orkand Chair Distinguished Lecture Series, held at the university's world head-



Melissa E. Hathaway

quarters in Adelphi, Maryland. Hathaway is a senior advisor at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs in the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and has served in two presidential administrations—most recently as acting director for cyberspace on the National Security Council in the Barack Obama administration, and during the last two years of the George W. Bush administration as cyber coordination executive and director of the Joint Inter-

agency Cyber Task Force in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

At UMUC, Hathaway presented a talk, entitled, "Digital Dependence: Cybersecurity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," that offered a sobering assessment of the challenges posed by cyber crime today—framed in a 42-year timeline of the evolution of the Internet—and argued that a thorough understanding of the past offers the best hope for predicting and preparing for the future.

"I think that the UMUC [cybersecurity] curriculum is an amazing start to be able to learn, connect the dots, and inform our future as we look to the past," said Hathaway. "I look forward to being part of the team that helps . . . to address some of the government's most important problems."

To view Hathaway's presentation online, visit [www.umuc.edu/orkandlecture](http://www.umuc.edu/orkandlecture) and click on "Lectures."

## UMUC Signs Collaborative Agreement with University of South Africa

BY UMUC PUBLIC RELATIONS

UMUC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in September 2010 with the University of South Africa (UNISA)—the largest university on the African continent, with 330,000 students. The agreement is designed to foster cultural, scholarly, and scientific ties between the institutions; to encourage academic exchange and collaboration; and to advance education and training.

UMUC President Susan C. Aldridge and UNISA Principal and Vice Chancellor Barney



UMUC President Susan C. Aldridge (seated, right) and UNISA Principal and Vice Chancellor Barney Pityana (seated, left) sign the historic memorandum of understanding in Pretoria, South Africa, as university stakeholders look on.

Pityana signed the three-year MOU in Pretoria, South Africa. Under the partnership, both parties agree to cooperate and collaborate based on their respective academic and educational needs and resources.

“This partnership between UMUC and UNISA is a testament to our commitment to furthering educational opportunities beyond our borders, and we believe the exchanges of scholars,

research, and academic information will greatly benefit students at both institutions,” said Aldridge. “We are pleased and proud to work with scholars and students alike at UNISA, and we look forward to positive outcomes that this agreement will produce for all involved.”

UNISA is Africa’s premier distance learning institution—

a reputable, comprehensive, flexible, and accessible open learning institution—and offers internationally accredited qualifications and world-class resources that inspire learners to create meaningful futures on their own terms. By forming partnerships in Africa and around the world, UNISA is able to help the people of Africa achieve their goals. ♦



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# MORE THAN A GAME

For Dori Samadzai-Bonner, a young refugee from Afghanistan, tennis came to represent the freedom of her adopted homeland.

BY ALLAN ZACKOWITZ

IT WAS A WARM MONDAY EVENING in late August, and Dori Samadzai-Bonner—a student in UMUC’s School of Undergraduate Studies—stood at center court of the Arthur Ashe Stadium in Flushing Meadows, New York, before a capacity crowd of 24,000 tennis fans and a national primetime television audience numbering in the millions. It was the opening night ceremony of the 2010 U.S. Open,

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**AT CENTER COURT**

UMUC STUDENT DORI SAMADZAI-BONNER (RIGHT) AT CENTER COURT WITH TENNIS SUPERSTAR MARTINA NAVRATILOVA (LEFT), U.S. OPEN WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPION ESTHER VERGEER (CENTER LEFT) AND DAVIS CUP CHAMPION JAMES BLAKE (CENTER RIGHT).

and standing alongside Samadzai-Bonner were three tennis superstars—including Martina Navratilova, the most prolific winner in the history of the sport.

All four were there to be recognized as tennis players who “Dream, Succeed, and Inspire,” and while Samadzai-Bonner does play tennis several times a week, she isn’t a professional and she isn’t exactly world-famous. In fact, the journey that brought her to center court began almost 7,000 miles away.

Samadzai-Bonner was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1977, and grew up during the Soviet occupation of the country. That was hard enough, but being a female made it even harder. Because she was a girl, Afghan tradition denied her many of the opportunities her brother enjoyed. Even her ability to move about freely in public was limited. What she longed for most, though, was to play some kind of sport, but that was discouraged among little girls. All she could do was watch from the sidelines as her brother ran and played, experiencing the fun vicariously.

There wasn’t much time to dwell on her disappointment, however. When she was just 10 years old, Samadzai-Bonner’s parents decided to seek refuge from the turmoil in Afghanistan by fleeing to India and from there traveling to the United States. They expected the move to take a month or two, but three years later—because of a complex visa lottery system set up by the U.S. embassy, with drawings held just three times a year for Afghan refugees—the family was still living in a garage in India.



“Each time during lottery week my brother and I and my parents prayed endlessly for a chance to come to the U.S., but our names were never drawn,” said Samadzai-Bonner.

While the family was safer in India, life was far from easy. They had left everything they owned in Afghanistan and, because they were refugees, Samadzai-Bonner’s parents were not allowed to work in India. Finally, in desperation, her parents arranged for a smuggler to take Samadzai-Bonner and her older brother to the United States. They only got as far as Thailand, where the smuggler stole their remaining money and abandoned the youngsters. Alone in a strange country, the two could only wait for their parents to scrape together enough money to get them the rest of the way to the United States.

“That was the scariest time of my life, but nonetheless an exciting one,” said Samadzai-Bonner. “The mere thought of coming to the U.S. overcame any fear I had of getting caught, being put in a jail, being separated from my brother, and never seeing or hearing from my parents again.”

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“Tennis instantly became my escape from the years of misery—through the Cold War, the suppression, and all the cruelty associated simply with the fact that I was born a girl.”

**GIVING BACK**  
DORI SAMADZAI-BONNER SHARES HER PASSION FOR TENNIS WITH STUDENTS FROM A NEARBY SCHOOL. HERE, SHE COACHES CAYLA HAMILTON ON HER TECHNIQUE.





**DORI SAMADZAI-BONNER**  
WITH HER HUSBAND, ERNEST LINCOLN  
BONNER III, A MAJOR IN THE U.S. AIR  
FORCE, WHOM SHE MARRIED IN 2008.

Finally, her parents managed to raise the needed funds, and Samadzai-Bonner and her brother reached New York on Christmas Eve 1991. From there, they traveled to Los Angeles to live with an aunt. In California, Samadzai-Bonner enrolled in North Hollywood High School, while she and her brother both worked part-time to earn enough money to bring their parents to the United States as well. So, despite her new freedom, the girl who had dreamed about participating in some type of sport had “zero time to play, and absolutely no outlet.”

Then, in her senior year, Samadzai-Bonner discovered tennis in a high school gym class. It was a game she had never even seen in Afghanistan.

“Tennis instantly became my escape from the years of misery—through the Cold War, the suppression, and all the cruelty associated simply with the fact that I was born a girl,” said Samadzai-Bonner. “I’m constantly reminded how incredibly fortunate I am to live in a country that allows me to appreciate my femininity and not resent it.”

Still, there wasn’t much time for tennis after high school. Samadzai-Bonner and her brother both postponed college so that they could continue to work and help provide for the family. Her parents managed to make it to the United States a year after she and her brother arrived, but the language barrier made it hard for them to support the family alone. For Samadzai-Bonner, that delay in attending college stretched into years, as she worked odd jobs and did volunteer work.

In 2008, Samadzai-Bonner became a U.S. citizen, and shortly after, married a major in the U.S. Air Force. Together, the couple moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where her new husband was stationed at Maxwell Air Force Base. And that was how she discovered UMUC and finally got around to enrolling in college—just 18 years after arriving in this country!

“At the outset, my life was not so hopeful, especially not full of a lot of hope for an education,” said Samadzai-Bonner. “There were various obstacles I had to overcome to be where I am today. At age 32, I suppose I should have been well done with my school, in a career, perhaps with a few kids . . . but, for me, I am just starting out.”

It was Samadzai-Bonner’s husband who suggested that she enroll at UMUC because it is a military-friendly school. But she was a bit skeptical at first.

“I was not sure if I’d really learn all the material necessary for my bachelor’s. Luckily, I had nothing to worry about. Attending UMUC has been one awesome experience,” said Samadzai-Bonner.

She credits her UMUC professors with providing the kind of thoughtful and motivating feedback with a “human touch” that she was concerned might be missing in an online environment, and she feels that she got to know these professors—and they got to know her and care about her learning—as though she were in a face-to-face class.

Since she enrolled in spring 2009, it’s been full steam ahead for Samadzai-Bonner. She has taken all of her classes online and

“They weren't expecting an essay about humanity, the very right to play the game, and all the advantages we too often take for granted in this country.”



is on track to complete her bachelor's degree in May 2011 with a major in criminal justice and a minor in homeland security. Along the way she has completed two internships that dovetail perfectly with her future career plans, one with the Alabama Department of Homeland Security, and one with the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center. Upon graduation, Samadzai-Bonner hopes to be accepted by the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, and eventually to land a position as either an FBI field agent or member of the counterterrorism unit.

Samadzai-Bonner says that she decided on her career path on September 11, 2001, and hasn't considered any other career options since that day.

“Like many others, I woke up to a day of absolute heartbreak. I felt helpless, because I did not have any skills to do my part to give back to this country that has given me so much. That day I vowed to one day help protect my new adopted country. To do so, I knew I had to get an education,” she said. “I want to be . . . on the front line of defense against attacks on our homeland and citizens.”

So how did Samadzai-Bonner's love for her adopted country and desire to help protect it lead to center court at the U.S. Open in New York? It started with an e-mail from the United States Tennis Association, asking their 750,000 members to describe “how tennis changed your life” for a chance to stand next to tennis superstars at the opening night ceremonies, representing all the amateur tennis players who also “Dream, Succeed, and Inspire.”

The association expected to get lots of stories about the healthful, social, and therapeutic aspects of tennis. But

according to Dave Kamperman, the USTA's chief executive for community tennis, they weren't expecting an essay about humanity, the very right to play the game, and all the advantages we too often take for granted in this country. Samadzai-Bonner's surprising story set her apart from the other entries, earning her the trip to New York and instant—if somewhat fleeting—star status in the tennis world.

She got to meet and stand alongside the three superstars, including a personal hero of hers, Martina Navratilova, a prolific winner who changed the face of women's tennis with her aggressive style of play and who recently defeated breast cancer; James Blake, a Davis Cup champion who overcame scoliosis as a youth and also came back to play on the men's tour after recovering from a fracture in his neck caused by an on-court accident in 2004; and Esther Vergeer, the singles and doubles U.S. Open Wheelchair Tennis champion, who has not lost a match in the past seven years. Most important of all, Samadzai-Bonner got to tell a story that she hopes will inspire other girls to face their life challenges and realize their dreams.

“I could spend a lifetime serving this country and still feel like I haven't done enough. For, along with everything else, this country has given me freedom,” Samadzai-Bonner said. “And, as anyone who has ever been deprived of it knows, freedom is the one thing that makes all other things possible.” ♦

**JUST STARTING OUT**  
WHILE SOME HER AGE ARE FINISHED WITH SCHOOL AND ESTABLISHED IN A CAREER, DORI SAMADZAI-BONNER SAYS SHE FEELS THAT SHE IS JUST STARTING OUT—AND SHE IS LOVING EVERY MINUTE.

# BRINGING SCIENCE OF



# LIFE

Dr. Sabrina S. Fu, winner of UMUC's 2010 Stanley J. Drazek Teaching Excellence Award, lives a life that is guided by the same scientific principles she teaches her students every day.

BY CHIP CASSANO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK FINKENSTRAEDT

FOR DR. SABRINA S. FU, who since 2001 has taught environmental management and biological and natural science in UMUC's School of Undergraduate Studies, science and education have always been important—guiding her career, shaping the way she lives her life, and influencing the way she teaches her classes.

“I believe,” said Fu, “based on study and observation, that many of our social, physical, and ecological problems are interrelated. For example, sitting inside large homes increases our sense of isolation, which aggravates social and psychological problems and is linked to poor health—such as increased heart disease—as well as to the ecological problems that come with increases in runoff and in the consumption of more building materials and fossil fuels.... So, in almost every class I teach, I encourage my students to get outside and exercise in the fresh air, to meet people, and to enjoy the beauty around them. And what better way to do that than by



Sabrina S. Fu—an advocate for volunteerism—shares her kitchen scraps with two residents of the Howard County Conservancy, where she and her children help out.

walking or biking? It's great for human health, better for social interactions, and better for our environment."

That simple, holistic approach to solving societal problems is one that Fu has developed over time, and it has evolved along with her grasp of the language and limits of science.

"Too often, the general public sees science as either magic or junk," said Fu, "but true science is neither; it is the most objective, open, and logical way for emotional beings—we humans—to comprehend the natural world around us."

That is a viewpoint Fu came by naturally. Her grandfather—a Chinese immigrant to Burma—started some of the first Chinese schools for girls in the country. After the political climate in Burma shifted, Fu's eldest uncle—who had earned top marks in Burmese schools and qualified to study at the University of California, Berkeley—sponsored her family, allowing them to move to the United States, where they settled in St. Paul, Minnesota, when Fu was eight years old.

"My father saw an education and a career in science as pathways to two things that were very important to him," said Fu. "First, he wanted greater financial stability for his children than he had been able to provide, but he also believed that science alone could solve many of society's problems."

**"When I'm teaching, that means looking at the entire human being—the student—and work-**



**ing to help integrate their responsibilities and their goals and desires, while keeping an eye on what it means to be an educated individual."**

Fu quickly excelled in her classes, and by the age of 16, while still in high school, she was working summers in research laboratories—and learning important lessons about her own beliefs and priorities.

"At one engineering firm where I worked, I was just appalled at how much time the employees spent doing nothing," Fu said. "That entire summer, I would go from person to person, begging for something to do, and even though in the end my evaluations were very good, I just didn't feel good about the experience. It taught me that I would rather make less money in an environment where I was doing productive work than sit around doing nothing."

That philosophy stayed with her, and after earning her undergraduate degree in chemistry from Carleton College, not far from St. Paul, she followed in her uncle's footsteps, enrolling at the University of California, Berkeley, where she completed her PhD in physical chemistry.

"Attending Berkeley was an amazing experience," said Fu. "It is one of those places where you could be waiting for the bus and have a Nobel laureate stop and offer you a ride. But going into Berkeley I was quite naïve, I guess, and I still thought that science could provide solutions to all of our problems. Soon enough I realized, 'Gosh, there's some pretty incredible science that has already been done; we just don't choose to use it, as a society, because we want to take the cheapest, easiest route.'"

So Fu went in search of an area of study that was worthy of her energy and talents. She finally focused on the challenge of nuclear waste management and immersed herself in the topic. It soon became clear to her that vitrification—which involves stabilizing nuclear waste in a glassy matrix so that it can decay safely—offered the greatest promise. Faced with an array of obstacles that ranged from political opposition and sloppy science to poor project management, though, she grew frustrated.

"You would not believe how many people I've met with advanced degrees in other fields who ask, 'Can't you just make

Sabrina Fu often bicycles to the Howard County Conservancy, where she volunteers. She encourages her students to walk or bicycle whenever possible as a way to improve their own health, meet other people, and help the environment.





nuclear waste go away? Can't you make it into something else? No, you can't! And I found it so frustrating that people tended to think selfishly, to think short-term, and I realized that until we are willing to discuss difficult societal problems, this nuclear waste problem will never go away. . . We have nuclear waste that's been in storage since 1943! And that's part of the reason I teach general science classes today, because I think we have to have an educated public if we're going to be successful as a democracy."

For Fu—who was by then married with two small children—it was time to reevaluate her career and priorities.

"We have spent tens of billions of dollars studying this, but we haven't remediated a single bit of our high-level nuclear waste! In a sense, I felt like I was wasting my time. I mean, I learned a lot personally, and I learned a lot about glass chemistry and glass physics, and I helped some graduate students gain some insight into this complex scientific and social problem, but after seven years, I said, 'That's enough.' And I just took some time off to reflect on what I wanted to do."

After spending a year in the United Kingdom, Fu returned to the United States with her family. When she saw an advertisement for an adjunct science professor at UMUC, she applied for the position, and she has been teaching for the university ever since. In 2004, she signed on as a full-time collegiate professor.

In many ways, the university environment allows her to both practice and share the ideas and values she has developed in a lifetime spent studying science, and she takes an integra-

tive approach to teaching and environmental management, based on what she terms sustainable thinking.

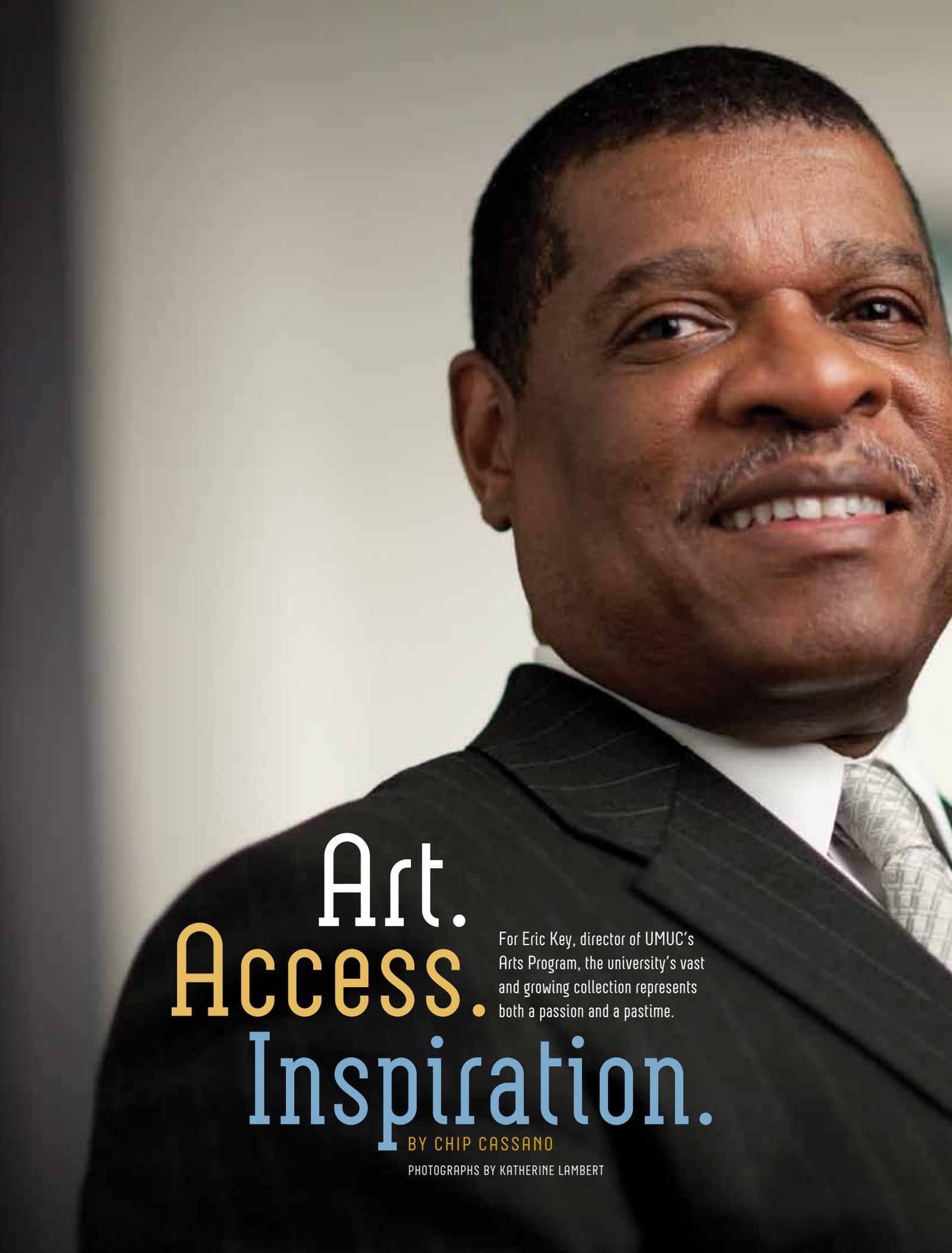
"Sustainable thinking means looking at systems and thinking long-term," said Fu. "When I'm teaching, that means looking at the entire human being—the student—and working to help integrate their responsibilities and their goals and desires, while keeping an eye on what it means to be an educated individual. So I try to make things relevant to their daily lives, and I try to encourage developing life skills, like taking care of one's health and gaining greater focus."

She encourages volunteerism, as well, and regularly helps

out with her children at the Howard County Conservancy in Woodstock, Maryland. She composts her kitchen scraps—another essential component of sustainable living—but often sets aside a few tidbits to share with the chickens and goats. She also volunteers with Frog Watch USA, collecting data on frog calls every spring; helps with the Howard County Legacy Leadership for the Environment; collects daily data for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network; and volunteers at her children's school.

Her students seem to respond to her down-to-earth approach, and for five straight years, Fu has been nominated for UMUC's highest honor for teaching excellence—the Stanley J. Drazek Teaching Excellence Award—which she won in 2010. Earlier, she was instrumental in securing a \$10,000 People, Prosperity, and Planet grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which allowed students to create educational tools for public use while developing a Web site that aggregated resources that encouraged people to reduce, recycle, and reuse. That initiative grew beyond the scope of the original project and has now spawned several classes dedicated to supporting and expanding its reach.

"I respect and admire UMUC students a great deal, especially when it comes to how they respond to challenges," said Fu, who herself struggled with a language learning disability in college. "Instead of saying, 'Oh, I have a job, I have my kids, I have to take care of my parents; there's no way I could earn a degree,' UMUC students take on the extra challenge of school because education is important to them." ♦

A close-up portrait of Eric Key, a Black man with a mustache, wearing a dark pinstriped suit jacket, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking off-camera to the right. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Art. Access. Inspiration.

For Eric Key, director of UMUC's Arts Program, the university's vast and growing collection represents both a passion and a pastime.

BY CHIP CASSANO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHERINE LAMBERT



VISITORS TO UMUC'S WORLD HEADQUARTERS in Adelphi, Maryland, and academic headquarters in Largo, Maryland, often comment on the artwork on display throughout the facilities—a breathtaking array of paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures that adorn the walls and line the public corridors and hallways. The various pieces are part of a large and rapidly growing international collection—now totaling more than 1,500 works—that includes what may be the largest and most significant collection of Maryland art in the world.



What visitors may not realize is the effort that goes into this spectacular display—the fundraising and grant writing, acquisitions and cataloging, lighting and presentation, maintenance and restoration, climate control and security.

Welcome to the world of Eric Key, director of UMUC's Arts Program.

An art lover, investor, and collector who—by his own admission—“can’t draw a straight line,” Key came to the university in 2008 with more than 20 years of experience in art administration, after serving most recently for more than a decade as executive director of the Kansas African American Museum in Wichita. There, he guided the organization through a period of growth that saw the annual operating budget increase more than tenfold, from \$32,000 to \$450,000, and broadened his experience in art administration—perfect preparation, as it turned out, for taking on the challenge of growing and shaping UMUC's collections.

That doesn't mean that the challenge is an easy one. But for Key, it holds a unique appeal.

“This isn't a job that requires me to sit behind a desk all day, and I like that,” said Key. “I go out, meet artists, visit galleries and collections, and so on. It's a seven-day-a-week job,

but I understood that when I took it. It's what I like to do. My pastime is art, so even when I'm at home, I'm looking at art auctions, keeping up with what's going on in the art world, watching the dynamics of movements and trends unfold.”

That fascination with and passion for the world of art came slowly for Key. A native of rural Smithfield, Virginia—the “ham capital of the world”—Key was raised by a hardworking family; his great grandmother was a seamstress, his mother a housewife, his father the descendant of slaves. His great grandmother especially encouraged him to get an education, though she didn't fully understand what that meant, beyond earning a high school diploma. Still, her encouragement helped to motivate Key.

“The light came on early, and I realized I needed to finish high school,” said Key. “Because I was always competitive with myself, I ended up finishing a year early, and with the encouragement of my friend and classmate Ronald Johnson, I decided to go on to college. But in terms of what I wanted to study, I had no idea!”

After briefly considering a military career, Key and another friend decided that they would become lawyers, instead.

“We were going to go to college, become lawyers, come back to Smithfield, and open up a law practice,” said Key. And with

“We don’t have a traditional museum, so our public space is our art gallery.

And that is a selling point for area artists. We can showcase their work. Their art is no longer in storage. People are looking at it, enjoying it.”

that rather open-ended goal in mind, he enrolled at Hampton University (formerly Hampton Institute) in Virginia, where he majored in political science.

“At Hampton, I encountered a completely different cultural dynamic,” said Key. “Hampton taught you about African American art and history, about your origins as an African American. Art was everywhere. Even during choir rehearsal, you would stand there looking at this huge mural by Charles White [*The Contribution of the Negro to Democracy in America*, c. 1943], seeing the strength and the color, the power in the arms and legs, and it seemed you couldn’t help but ask, ‘What is this? What is it about? Who painted it?’ And looking back, you realize that you were starting to learn about art history, about the Mexican muralist school of art, and so on. And that just resonated with me.”

That atmosphere permeated the campus, said Key. “I learned the Negro National Anthem in my English class, learned about Booker T. Washington during freshman orientation, learned about blacks in government in my political science classes. I truly believe the ancestors were speaking to me, but I was too busy working to pay for my education to listen.”

For a while, Key remained true to his dream of becoming a lawyer, but slowly art, art history, and African American culture began to loom large in his life.

“By the end of my senior year I realized that I was tired of school and needed a break,” Key said, laughing. “So, after working several odd jobs, I decided to go back to school and pursue a master’s degree in museum studies. In the process, I took a job in the University Museum, and I think that’s what really did it. That’s when the light came on. I realized that I enjoyed everything about art—I enjoyed studying it, handling it, meeting the artists, the whole nine yards. A joy came over me. I realized that I wouldn’t get rich in this field, but I also learned that it was rewarding to me spiritually and intellectually, and I made the choice of being happy versus being rich.” He went on to complete his master’s degree from Hampton, and he has never looked back.

His passion carries over into his work, and from the time Key joined UMUC in 2008, the university has added almost 400 individual pieces to its collection, while at the same time increasing the percentage of the collection that is on public display at any given time, from 50 percent to approximately 80 percent. But Key’s vision for the Arts Program going forward is more ambitious still.

“At UMUC, we are blessed with a distinguished and gifted group of individuals on our Art Advisory

*Continued on page 23*

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# Commentary: Knowledge Seekers and Knowledge Providers

BY JAY LIEBOWITZ

IN ACADEME, EQUILIBRIUM SHOULD EXIST between “knowledge seekers” and “knowledge providers.” In the traditional sense, our students are the knowledge seekers and faculty and staff are the knowledge providers. Students typically are yearning for knowledge, and professors are happy to share their knowledge with them. Of course in the Web 2.0 world, wikis, social networking sites, and blogs can be the electronic forums for providing knowledge in today’s wired world. The distinction between who is a knowledge seeker and who is a knowledge provider becomes blurred as, for example, professors (and students) can play both roles in seeking knowledge to answer their research questions and also providing knowledge once gained.

In the university setting, we are constantly striving for the truth and knowledge creation. We want to push the current state-of-the-art and generate advancements through research and development. Innovations demand the constant prodding of challenging questions. We seek the answers to these questions, but once we find them, we need to create a balance between the seekers and providers of knowledge.

In social networking parlance, people who send their knowledge are knowledge transmitters. Those who receive the knowledge are knowledge receivers. In an organization, we would want a balance between knowledge transmitters and knowledge receivers, or perhaps an excess of knowledge transmitters, which would encourage knowledge sharing versus knowledge hoarding. In some organizations, the employees may be shy or reluctant to ask for knowledge for fear of looking ignorant. However, an organization should want to encourage the flows of knowledge to stimulate collaboration, connections, and innovation. That’s where the equilibrium of knowledge receivers and knowledge transmitters, or knowledge seekers and knowledge providers, should be maintained and promulgated.

So, what is the point? We as faculty must continue to create an environment of active, versus passive, learning. In businesses, the same holds true for creating a continuous learning culture. By building and nurturing a safe environment to challenge, test, and

create ideas, knowledge seeking and providing behaviors should thrive to harness the “sharing knowledge is power” phenomenon. The recognition and reward structure should take into account these behaviors and push for the qualities displayed in asking and sharing of knowledge. As the culture evolves, this “knowledge management” milieu will permeate the university, business, government, or not-for-profit organization to make knowledge seeking and knowledge providing the norms for tomorrow’s organization.

At UMUC, we are making strides in nurturing and fostering knowledge creation and sharing. For example, the Provost’s Office recently announced the Faculty Research Time Release Program, in which an initial \$100,000 has been set aside as seed money for FY11 grants under this competitive program. Thus far, we have awarded six grants for this academic year to encourage research and innovation. In addition, the monthly Faculty Research “Lunch & Learn” seminars, visiting scholar’s presentations, research workshops, sponsored research grants, Orkand Chair Distinguished Lectures, SOARS (Student Opportunities to Advance Research and Scholarship) research poster sessions, UMUC Working Paper series, UMUC Provost’s Best Paper Award, and other related research-oriented initiatives have helped UMUC stimulate a stronger sense of intellectual inquiry to complement our core teaching mission. Our new, one-stop shopping site for research can be accessed through the library or [DEOracle.org](http://DEOracle.org) (under UMUC Research and Scholarship/Faculty and Student Research) at [www.umuc.edu/library/research\\_pubs/research.shtml](http://www.umuc.edu/library/research_pubs/research.shtml).

All these initiatives are helping the university to further create an active knowledge sharing culture for stimulating new ideas for adoption by our UMUC community and others. In this manner, we will continue to build UMUC as a continuous learning organization and further develop our knowledge seekers and providers for sustained success. ♦

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*Jay Liebowitz is the Orkand Endowed Chair in Management and Technology in UMUC’s Graduate School of Management and Technology. He credits his son, Kenny Liebowitz, with the topic of this piece.*

**Roxanne Gonzales '82**



Parkville, Missouri, was promoted to the position of dean of distance learning at Park University, after first serving as associate dean of distance learning. She is also a member of the Park

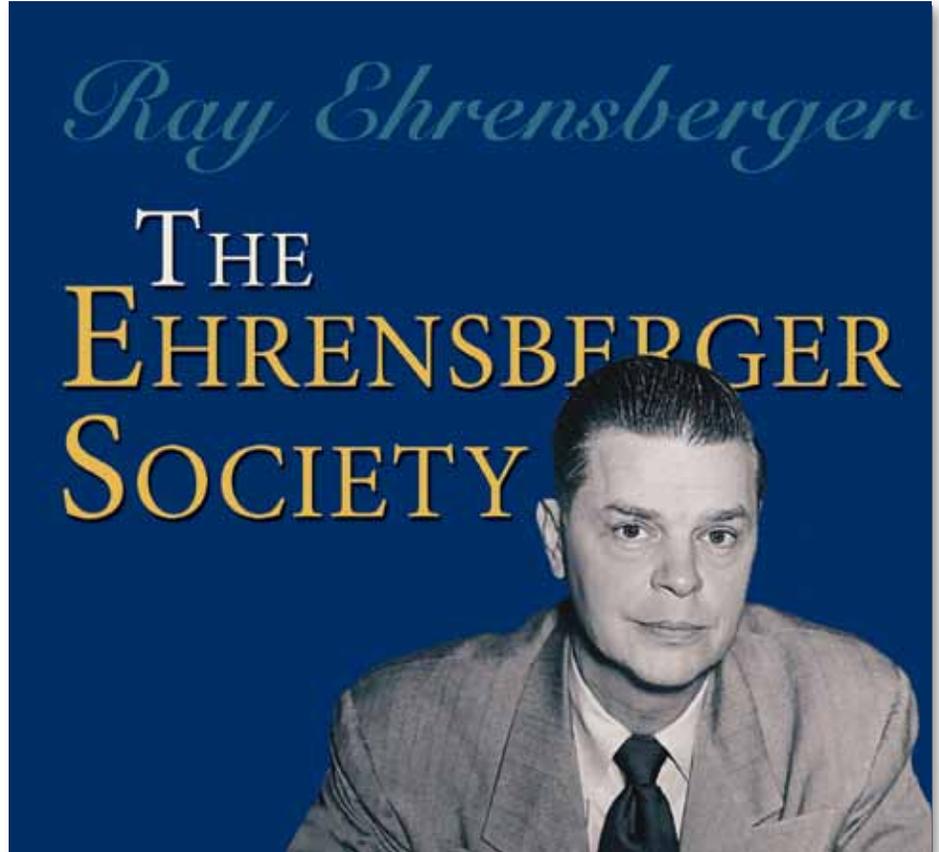
University faculty, serving as associate professor of adult education and president of the Association for Continuing Higher Education. She has worked in adult education and training for more than 28 years. Said Thimios Zaharopoulos, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs at Park University, "Dr. Gonzales has had a career in distance and military education that has perfectly prepared her to take on the role of dean of Park Distance Learning. She is an academic who has the appropriate administrative skills to run the day-to-day affairs of PDL."

**Marcelite J. Harris '89**

Atlanta, Georgia, retired with the rank of major general from the U.S. Air Force, and now serves on UMUC's Board of Visitors. In November 2010, she was featured on Black Entertainment Television (BET), where she received a BGR (Black Girls Rock) award in the category of trailblazer and was cited as "a proven leader with exceptional skills in management...." She was recently appointed to the Board of Visitors for the U.S. Air Force Academy by President Barack Obama.

**Bruce Tyler '95 & '09**

Catonsville, Maryland, a graduate of UMUC's Executive MBA program, is the founder and CEO of AttivaSoft, a global IT service management consulting firm in Columbia, Maryland. He received a 2010 Future 50 Smart CEO Award from *Baltimore SmartCEO* magazine. The award recognizes the 50 fastest-growing companies in the Greater Baltimore area, based on employee and revenue growth.



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**Kirk Platt '99**

Glen Burnie, Maryland, in 2010 was commissioned Snow Emergency Driver 1 for the Baltimore Washington Medical Center, transporting hundreds of doctors and nurses during the major snowstorms in the Washington, D.C., region in December 2009 and February 2010, including during a week-long series of 19-hour days February 5–11. He was also chosen to run the transportation team at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree at Fort A. P. Hill

near Bowling Green, in Caroline County, Virginia. In that role, he oversaw a 21-day effort to ensure that the Scouts had safe and reliable transportation to, around, and home from the Jamboree.

**Angela McLaughlin '02**

Silver Spring, Maryland, started her own technology consulting firm in 2006, NorCal Technology Consulting Services ([www.nctcs.com](http://www.nctcs.com)), and reported that she is pleased to have survived the recession. She married Chris McLaughlin in May 2007.

**Greg Fugate '04**

St. Louis, Missouri, launched a new company, Brands That Do Good, in September 2010. Their first brand is Doggie-U—under the slogan, “A wag is a terrible thing to waste”—which promises to donate 10 percent of all proceeds to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Fugate wrote, “We are 100 percent virtual—with team members in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, North Carolina, and Virginia—and we find ourselves constantly relying on the lessons learned as



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#### **Melanie Keller '04 & '09**

Gambrills, Maryland, a graduate of UMUC's Executive MBA program, developed an international market entry strategy for Bio-Analytics Labs as part of a team project. In the process, she learned so much about the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval process for new drugs that she then applied for a position at the FDA and was hired in December 2010. Previously, she was director of scientific review for the National Institutes of Health; in her new position, she will serve as associate director for management in the Center for Drugs at the FDA.

#### **Jennifer G. Stephens '04**

Fredericksburg, Virginia, earned her Doctor of Education (EdD) in administrator leadership from Walden University in August 2010. She was also inducted into the Alpha Epsilon Xi Chapter 810 of the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education.

#### **Annette Streeter '09**

Riverside, California, a graduate of UMUC's Executive MBA program, was appointed assistant to the industry director at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), where she will focus on addressing high wealth individuals and their related entities. She will help build out the industry, including field groups and a compliance monitoring operation, and will support the new groups and monitoring operation as they are set up.

#### **Matnita Green '11**

Silver Spring, Maryland, established Green Associated, LLC, a bookkeeping company, in 2006, and reports that the business continues to thrive and grow. She wrote, “I believe that the educational foundation I obtained from my experience at UMUC helped me to build a successful business.”

## A LIFE IN TEACHING



UMUC associate professor **WILLIAM HAR-LOWE**—pictured here with UMUC President Susan C. Aldridge—retired in 2010 after a 43-year career of teaching history and government for UMUC across Europe and Asia. His first teaching assignment was in Vietnam during the war; for the past 20-plus years he has taught in England, most recently at the Royal Air Force Lakenheath air base. He received special recognition at a United Kingdom faculty meeting in the fall of 2010, where this photo was taken.

*Continued from page 19*

## Art. Access. Inspiration.

Board who have deep roots in the local and national art community, and with their guidance, support, and assistance, I want to continue adding to the collection,” said Key, “not only major works of art, but also works from emerging and developing artists. I see the Arts Program coming to represent a very culturally diverse collection, as well, one that is representative of all the art in this area, and I see the program as a whole helping artists develop their careers by hosting exhibitions and other events. At the same time, I want to give the program more visibility in the local community, so that it becomes a focal point, not only for our UMUC family, but for the community as a whole.”

Most important, given UMUC's location, Key is committed to increasing the prominence of the Maryland Artists Collection.

“We're located in a region where the arts are prevalent,” said Key. “We've got Baltimore to the north and the Smithsonian to the south, but there is still a need and desire for a program that highlights Maryland artists and regional artists. We don't have a traditional museum here at UMUC, so our public space *is our art gallery*. And that is a selling point for area artists who might be interested in donating to our collection. We can showcase their work. Their art is no longer in storage. People are looking at it, enjoy-

ing it, and getting acquainted with the creator—the artist.”

That, Key argues, offers the same educational value that art gave him as a university student, and ultimately benefits the institution, as well.

“Every day we have visitors come here for meetings or conferences, often for the first time,” said Key. “And here they are exposed to art—*real* art—with its beauty and history and cultural context, and it makes an impression on them. They remember more than the conference or meeting—and they remember UMUC. And they go back and tell their friends.”

But Key's passion for art doesn't end with his job. He is an avid collector of African American art, African spoons, and ivory, and now owns approximately 200 works in a variety of mediums. He calls collecting an addiction, but it is an addiction that he has no intention of breaking. “Instead of spending money on expensive airfares or hotel stays, I use that money to purchase art,” said Key. “I think I am going to be buried with art around me, but until then, I'm just going to surround myself with it and enjoy it now.” ♦

To make a gift to the UMUC Arts Program, or to learn about other giving opportunities at the university, contact Cathy Sweet-Windham, vice president of Institutional Advancement, by phone at 240-582-2700 or by e-mail at [csweet-windham@umuc.edu](mailto:csweet-windham@umuc.edu).

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The university’s multi-year “Building a Legacy of Educational Opportunities: The Campaign for UMUC”—which has already achieved 90 percent of its \$26 million campaign goal—will end on June 30, 2011. But the need for scholarship and program support will continue.

During this campaign, the university launched new educational initiatives in response to workforce and national security needs, including cutting-edge undergraduate and graduate cybersecurity programs, a Master of Arts in Teaching, and degree programs in criminal justice.

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### Donors and scholarship recipients honored

On Friday, October 15, 2010, the university celebrated the generosity of donors and the success of students at the annual Scholarship Appreciation Dinner. Many donors had the opportunity to meet grateful scholarship recipients. These scholarships would not have been possible without the support of the entire UMUC family.



Former Alumni Association Board Member Betty Montgomery and Minor-Montgomery Scholarship recipient Gary Marcelin share a moment at the Scholarship Appreciation Dinner.

UMUC President Susan C. Aldridge and scholarship recipient Arfa Syed, who was featured in this year’s Faculty and Staff Campaign effort.



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